

Noncommercial River Permit System Guidelines

I. Definition of a Noncommercial River Trip

- A. A noncommercial river trip must be participatory in nature. Trip preparation (including logistics, food purchase, equipment assembly, transportation, and vehicle shuttle) and conduct of the trip (including food preparation and sanitation) must be shared by members of the group. Collecting a set fee (monetary compensation), payable to an individual, group, or organization for conducting, leading, or guiding a noncommercial river trip is not allowed. The trip permittee should delegate responsibility (financial and otherwise) for various aspects of trip preparation and conduct.
- B. Trips may be considered noncommercial even though a member of the trip, within their normal scope of employment receives a salary from an educational institution or non-profit organization to participate in the trip. This salary may not come directly through fees contributed by members of the party. No person may be hired or paid to participate in a trip operating under the noncommercial permit system.

II. Noncommercial Waiting-list Guidelines

Grand Canyon National Park's River Permits Office maintains a waiting-list of people interested in obtaining a private, noncommercial permit to bring a group of acquaintances, friends, and/or family down the Colorado River between Lee's Ferry and Diamond Creek. The purpose of this list is to help the park ensure those who have waited the longest for a noncommercial trip are offered opportunities ahead of those who have not waited as long. To join and/or remain on the waiting-list, each individual (not a company or individual representing that person) must meet specific requirements and continue to demonstrate both an interest and commitment toward obtaining a noncommercial river trip. Whether or not one receives a reminder from the River Permits Office, it is the responsibility of each individual waiting-list participant to ensure the following guidelines and deadlines mentioned below are met. Please read this information carefully.

A person may hold only one position on the list. Waiting-list positions will not be continued if incomplete information is given. Only one request for new addition/continuing interest per envelope will be accepted. No company or individual may make a profit as a result of waiting-list requirements. Although there is currently no age restriction for those wishing to be on the noncommercial waiting-list (except completing all forms and letters for filing periods for himself/herself), a launch date may only be claimed by person's 18 years of age or older.

- A. **New Applicants:** New applicants to the waiting-list will be charged a non-transferable and non-refundable \$100 waiting-list application surcharge by authority of 36 CFR 71.10, Sec. 1-6, Special Recreation Permits and Special Recreation Permit Fees. Written requests postmarked between February 1 and February 28 to be added to the waiting-list with a credit card, personal check, or money order for \$100 will be accepted. *Cash will not be accepted.* Information needed at the time of placement on the list is full legal name, address, daytime telephone number, the first 7 digits of the applicant's social security number, and signature of the applicant. Notification of placement on the waiting-list will be sent by April 15th.

- B. **Continuing Interest:** All persons on the waiting-list are responsible for informing the River Permits Office in writing each year before January 31st that they wish to remain on the waiting-list. Continuing Interest (CI) forms may be sent in anytime on or after receipt of that year's CI Newsletter or December 15th, whichever is earliest. **All persons on the list are required to submit continuing interest every year whether or not they hear from The River Permits Office.** Forms are sent to everyone on the waiting-list usually in October of every year. To meet this deadline, letters must be postmarked before January 31. The information required when continuing your interest on the waiting-list is your full legal name, the last recorded address, any new address, daytime telephone number, the first 7 digits of your social security number, and your signature. Waiting-list members will be allowed to miss one CI filing period over any four-year time frame. Missing the CI filing period twice over any four-year time frame will result in removal from the list. Waiting-list members are responsible to notify the River Permits Office of any change of address. There is no fee to continue interest.

It is highly recommended that letters confirming interest in remaining on the list and letters of new addition to the list be sent by Certified Mail, Return Receipt Requested. In this way you can ensure the letter has been received at the River Permits Office by the due date. We cannot take responsibility for letters not received due to Postal Service error.

Whenever there is a discrepancy between a postmark and a meter mark, we make the determination to accept a letter based on the postmark because office meters are readily available and may be tampered with. Notification of placement on the waiting-list will be sent in April.

- C. **Participation in Other Noncommercial Trips:** There is no limit to the number of river trips a person may participate in during a year. However, any person on the waiting-list or with a scheduled launch date will be allowed to participate in only one other noncommercial trip for his/her entire length of wait on the list. The second noncommercial trip he/she participates in will result in immediate removal from the waiting-list or loss of his/her scheduled launch date. After the second river trip is completed, the person may follow procedures for the February filing period for new additions to the

list. Trip leaders may not have a scheduled trip and be on the waiting-list at the same time. Trip leaders may reapply to the waiting-list during the February filing period following the completion of his/her trip.

III. Scheduling of Noncommercial Permits

A. How the Initial Scheduling Process Works:

1. In the month of October the River Permits Office will attempt to contact everyone in at least the top 300 on the waiting-list to participate in the "Initial Scheduling" process.
2. Waiting-list members in this top portion of the waiting-list will have the option to schedule launch dates for the noncommercial season that is 1½ to 2½ years away or to wait another year before scheduling. In either case, initial scheduling forms will be due at the River Permits Office by December 15th. Failing to meet this deadline is equivalent to missing a continuing interest deadline. Missing two Continuing Interest deadlines within a 4-year time frame will result in removal from the list. On the scheduling forms waiting-list participants should indicate all the launch dates they are willing to accept in order of preference.
3. Launch dates will be awarded to waiting-list participants according to waiting-list priority. If someone with a better waiting-list number has claimed the participant's first preference, the River Permits Office will award the next preferred launch date available. If all of the launch dates requested by a person have been taken, the person will be returned to the waiting-list and contacted again the following year for participation in another year's initial scheduling process. Dates leftover after preference forms have been processed will be offered to those immediately lower on the waiting list through a similar process and/or through the cancellation line to those lower on the waiting list.
4. Similarly, those who return forms by the deadline and chose not to schedule will be contacted the following year for participation in another year's initial scheduling process.
5. Launch dates awarded through this process can be deferred to exactly 3 years later than the original launch date provided all the following is true. 1) The trip must not have been obtained through the call-in system / cancellation line. 2) The trip must never have been deferred for any reason, medical or otherwise. 3) The trip must never have been transferred to an alternate trip leader. 4) The request to defer the trip must be received by the River Permits Office at least 90 days prior to the original launch date or be based on a physician confirmed medical problem and submitted in advance of the original launch date. The confirmed medical problem must be of the nature that it will not allow the original trip leader to participate in the original trip. Once a deferment has been granted, no further deferment or selection of an alternate trip leader will be considered or granted should the permittee be unable to complete the trip.
6. Launch dates awarded through this initial scheduling process can be passed to an acceptable alternate trip leader only if all the following is true. 1) The trip must not have been obtained through the call-in system / cancellation line. 2) The trip must never have been deferred for any reason, medical or otherwise. 3) The trip must never have been transferred to an alternate trip leader. 4) Alternate trip leaders are not considered "acceptable" if they were not listed on the "Initial Scheduling" form that originally was submitted to the River Permits Office. 5) Alternate trip leaders are not considered "acceptable" if they have participated in a noncommercial river trip in Grand Canyon National Park within the 4 years previous to the launch date. 6) No person may participate in the trip if they have participated in another noncommercial river trip in Grand Canyon National Park within the 4 years previous to the launch date. Since no one who has an upcoming launch may remain on the waiting-list, an alternate trip leader who is given a trip and is on the waiting-list will be removed from the list.
7. Launch dates may be exchanged by writing a letter to the River Permits Office. It is the permittee's responsibility to find and contact other permittees to ask if they want to exchange dates. (The River Permits Office is restricted from providing names and addresses.) If agreement is reached with another permittee, one must send the River Permits Office a signed letter from each party requesting the exchange. Launch dates obtained through the cancellation line may not be exchanged for any reason.

B. Cancellation Line Policy:

1. **Eligibility:** Applicants with official verification from the River Permits Office of placement on the waiting-list are eligible to utilize the Call-in System / Cancellation Line.
2. **How the Cancellation Line Works:** The River Permits Office releases cancelled launch dates in a way that favors those who have waited the longest. Here is how it works.
 - a. When cancellations result in probable under-use of user-days, the River Permits Office will compensate by releasing additional launch dates beginning on Monday morning.

River Permits Office, Grand Canyon National Park
PO Box 129, Grand Canyon, AZ 86023, (800) 959-9164, Fax (928) 638-7844

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- b. Each Friday evening, the “cancellation information” phone line message will be updated to list launch dates that will be released during the next week. Waiting-list participants will be able to call that line any time over the weekend or on weekdays after 5:00pm, to find out what dates will become available. The message will explain what number to call and when to call to claim the cancellation. Currently the cancellation information number is (800) 959-9164 option 4. Those from out of the United States may call (928) 638-7843 option 4 (This is the same phone line).
 - c. On Monday morning at 8:00 a.m. River Permits Office employees will begin answering the call-in system / cancellation line. The announced launch dates will be released to the first eligible caller wanting that date. While the schedule for when people can call is subject to change and will be announced through the “cancellation information” message over the weekend, generally only waiting-list participants with numbers from 1 to 1499 are eligible to call the call-in system / cancellation line on Mondays. The call-in system / cancellation line phone number is (928) 638-7883.
 - d. Eligibility will increase throughout the week. On Tuesdays those with Waiting-list Numbers between 1 and 2999 are eligible to call. On Wednesdays callers must have numbers between 1 and 4499. On Thursdays those with Waiting-list numbers between 1 and 5999 can call. On Fridays all waiting-list participants are eligible to call.
 - e. The phone line recording will be changed as dates are taken.
 - f. Usually the call-in system / cancellation line will not be answered on federal holidays. If launch dates are to be released during a week with a holiday, typically the call-in system / cancellation line phone message will be updated to explain how the process will be modified to work for that week.
3. Those claiming a launch date through the call-in system / cancellation line will be deleted immediately from the waiting-list. **Once a launch date has been claimed through the call-in system / cancellation line, the trip may not be rescheduled, deferred, exchanged, nor passed to an alternate trip leader.** The trip leader will be given until 90 days before launch to complete and submit all the required application paperwork and permit fees to the River Permits Office. (In the case of launch dates released within 105 days of launch, trip leaders will be given 2 weeks from the time of acceptance through the cancellation line to submit all the required application paperwork and permit fees to the River Permits Office). Applications and credit card payments may be submitted by fax directly to the River Permits Office **(928) 638-7844** and followed up by a call to the River Permits Office **(800) 959-9164 before the deadline** to confirm receipt). Trip leaders who fail to submit all the required application paperwork and fees by the 90-day or 2-week after acceptance deadline will not only have given their place up on the waiting-list, they will also lose their trip. In addition, please remember that ***all fees are nonrefundable.***
4. Generally no open dates with less than 10 workdays of lead-time will be considered available. This time is necessary for processing the permit. Exceptions may be made at the end of the non-commercial season so that non-commercial use of user-day allocations can be maximized.

C. Permit Fees

A trip participant is any person joining any portion of a river trip. If 14 people launch from Lees Ferry, 4 get off at Phantom Ranch, and 6 other people join the trip at Phantom Ranch, this adds up to a total of 20 trip participants.

Ninety days prior to launch, trip leaders are responsible for submitting a permit application and paying a **non-refundable** permit fee of **\$100 per trip participant**. This application and payment is due in the River Permits Office by the 90-days-prior-to-launch deadline. No further entrance or river fees are due to the park, and no money is accepted or collected at Lees Ferry. Entrance passes will be provided to you for your participants who must pass through the South Rim entrance station to hike in to meet your trip.

To avoid added penalty fees of \$100 per person, one must commit to and pay for the total number of participants 90 days ahead of a launch. One person starting at Lees Ferry then hiking out and one person hiking in at any location counts as TWO PARTICIPANTS. In this example two \$100 trip participant fees would be paid at least 90 days before launch.

Requests for late additions must be submitted to the River Permits Office no later than 14 days before launch. For these late additions there will be the normal \$100 charge per added person plus an additional late fee of \$100 per added person.

If a trip participant is unable to go on a trip at the last minute, one for one substitutions may occur at Lee’s Ferry for no additional charge.

IV. Allocation, Launch, and Trip Limits

- A.** The noncommercial seasons and user day allocations are as follows:

Primary Season:	April 16 th - October 15 th	43,920 user days
Secondary Season:	October 16 th - April 15 th	10,530 user days

- B.** During the primary season, 221 launches will be available and will be scheduled one per day with two launches occurring on one day per week April 16 through October 15. No more than 3 supplemental launches will occur in a week, with at least a day between the supplemental launches. The supplemental launches will be scheduled on days that traditionally launch fewer, commercial trips and the commercial passenger launch limit will be held to 134 on these days.
- C.** During the secondary season, 52 launches will be available. Five launches per week will be allowed, with trips launching on no more than 2 consecutive days in a row.
- D.** Maximum trip lengths allowed on the river between Lees Ferry and Diamond Creek (including layovers and off-river hiking days) are listed below. As an example, if you launch from Lees Ferry on May 1st and arrive at Diamond Creek on May 18th, your trip length will have been 18 days.

<u>Launch Date</u>	<u>Trip Length</u>
April 16 - October 15	18 Days
October 16 - November 30	21 Days
December 1 - February 29	30 Days
March 1 - April 15	21 Days

- E.** A 3-month period has been set exclusively for oar-powered craft on the river. Motor-powered boats are prohibited from launching from September 16 through December 15. During the remainder of the year, both oar- and motor-powered boats may launch. Beginning April 16, 2001, four-stroke motors will be the only type of motor allowed on the Colorado River through Grand Canyon National Park.
- F.** The maximum size for a noncommercial river trip is 16 people, including the trip leader.

V. Primary Season User Day Pool

- A.** Unused allocation days resulting from trips already completed will be pooled throughout the season beginning May 1 through September 15. Supplemental launches will be added for the months of August, September, and October upon availability of the maximum number of user days for a primary season trip (18 days X 16 passengers = 288 user days).
- B.** The process described in Section III-B (Cancellation Line Policy) will be used to fill these launch dates.

VI. Diamond Creek Applications and Permits

- A.** Permits are issued on first come, first serve basis with no more than two launches per day. Currently there is no fee for the permit.
- B.** Contact the River Permits Office to obtain application and regulations.
- C.** The Hualapai Indian Nation charges per person, per vehicle fees at Diamond Creek launch ramp. Contact the Hualapai for fee information, 1-800-622-4409 or (928) 769-2210.

VII. Little Colorado River Trips

- A.** Permission for the use of watercraft must be obtained in advance of the trip. A permit to traverse tribal lands must be obtained from the Navajo Nation.
- B.** A noncommercial permit may be obtained through the scheduling process described in Section III by anyone on the waiting list. The launch date from the point of entry must coincide with noncommercial Lees Ferry launches. Prior arrangements may be made to meet a commercial or noncommercial river trip. Notification must be given to the River Permits Office prior to launch.

Please note that at the discretion of the Superintendent, any violation of the noncommercial river permit system guidelines may result in the administrative removal from, or not being permitted to be placed on, the waiting-list.